

Washington, DC -- Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted for and helped the House pass the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2009 (H.R. 3548) -- of which he is an original co-sponsor -- to provide an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits for workers in states with jobless rates higher than 8.5% -- including Pennsylvania. The bill was approved by a 331-83 margin.

In August, American job losses were 216,000 -- the lowest monthly job loss total in a year -- but the unemployment rate increased to 9.7 percent and is likely to get worse, with 14.9 million Americans looking for work.

Not only are there fewer job opportunities for hardworking Americans overall, but the cost of living has risen significantly, said Congressman Sestak. We have a responsibility, during economic times like these, to ensure that men and women looking for work can provide for themselves and their families and can afford to search for a job.

More than 300,000 workers in the United States are projected to exhaust their current unemployment benefits by the end of September and over 1 million people will run out of unemployment by the end of December unless Congress acts. Extending unemployment benefits is a particularly crucial provision in Pennsylvania where nearly 20,000 individuals will lose benefits by the end of September and 61,000 by December. Earlier this year, Congress helped 3.5 million Americans looking for jobs -- providing up to 13 weeks of extended unemployment benefits in every state to workers who had exhausted the 33 weeks of regular unemployment benefits.

The estimated cost of the bill \$1.4 billion is fully offset and does not add to the deficit. It is paid for by extending the federal unemployment assessment for one year that has been in place for more than 30 years, and requires better reporting on newly hired employees to reduce unemployment insurance overpayments.

We cannot forget that recipients spend unemployment benefits quickly, making this legislation an important part of our effort to support continued economic recovery, said Congressman Sestak. In fact, one of Moody's chief economists has determined that every dollar spent on unemployment compensation generates \$1.63 in new economic demand.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.